

Doctors were paid a horse or more for their services. Sometimes several, 756
in turn, doctored a patient, each one blaming those that had failed before.
Often they laid the sickness to spirits, or to other doctors. This last occurred
especially if in their sucking they extracted human finger-nails or similar
objects. In such a case the doctor got his patient to sleep. The patient
might then in his dream see the person that had made him sick, and on
awaking would denounce him. If the
sick man died, his relatives might kill
the doctor whom he had named as the
cause of his sickness.

There were not so many women doctors
as men. They appear not to have
gone out to the mountains with the inten-
tion of acquiring supernatural power, but
to have received guardian spirits when
they were away from the camp,
mourning.

The jugular and femoral arteries and
the aorta were called ts'niinotahoudj¹
("having no cure"), because, when sev-
ered, they did not need any remedies.

In order to save the life of a sick rela-
tive, the joint of the little finger was
sometimes cut off in sacrifice to the
sun.

There were some medicine-men who,
having had their fingers tied, then had
their knees fastened together and their
hands secured behind their back. After
this they were wrapped in a robe and the
robe was wound about with a rope.
Then such a medicine-man called his
spirit. When it appeared, he was loos-
ened instantaneously, and the robe and the rope were thrown at the man
that tied him.

A charm used by a doctor is shown in Fig. 30. It consists of a deer-tail 756
with beaded base, and of two black feathers and a bunch of down feathers. 778
All parts of the object are reddened. This piece was used to brush patients.
At other times during the doctoring it was worn on the medicine-man's
clothing.

A man unsuccessful in winning a woman's love sometimes fasted on a



Fig. 30 (50 1937). Doctor's Charm.
Length, 22 cm.

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787 mountain and asked the spirit that appeared to him for a love-medicine
 832 which would bring him the woman. Soon after, she would come to him and
 try to obtain his love, but usually he would reject her, for a time at least,
 by way of revenge.

A young middle-aged man of the present time is noted for his love-medicine. He tells the following. He was once in love with a woman who only reviled him. For a long time this was on his mind. Constantly thinking of her harsh treatment of him, he fasted in a number of places, and finally received supernatural power. Then the woman came to him. She kissed him on the cheek; but he said, "You have abused me," and he made her go away. Four times she came to him; only the fourth time did he consent to gratify her wishes. Since that time, he has frequently used his medicine. His present wife was living with a white trader, where she had every comfort and great abundance; but by his medicine he made her leave the trader for him. His wife, it would appear, looks upon his powers without jealousy. He sells the use of his medicine to young men for two horses. His young son is crippled, so that he would have difficulty in winning women; but his father is keeping the medicine for him, so that he will be able to possess any woman he desires. The objects used include several medicine-plants. Some of these appear to be used to incense the man who is making the medicine. When a woman is unusually obdurate, wild parsnip (the root supposed to produce the peculiar state of mind of the crazy-dance) is employed by this man. When he begins to exert his influence on a woman, she becomes restless and sexually excited. She leaves the tent frequently, and will cohabit with any man. When the influence of the medicine is removed, she remains faithful to her lover.

MEDICINES AND PLANTS.

278 The following medicines, consisting chiefly of plants, are almost wholly
 757 family remedies, and, while no doubt also used by medicine-men, their
 supposed effects are generally known, and not connected with any personal
 supernatural experiences of the person using them. As the specimens were
 secured in winter, it was impossible to obtain material for botanical identification.

Wanouwaso ("wart-medicine"), a root, is used for stomach-ache (specimen Museum No. 50-1840).

A root called ahaa'tjiiniqua ("wood-like") is used for colic. This seems to be the root of a species of *Asclepias* (specimen Museum No. 50-1830).

A root called haaso ("red medicine," because it is reddish when fresh) is used for diarrhoea (specimen Museum No. 50-1914).

174 *The Gros Ventres of Montana: Part I, Social Life*

584 trained to do a woman's work. Then when she was ten or eleven
582 she was handed over to some man. They thought that if they gave
her to her husband when she was so young she would get attached
to him and make him a good wife. The Gros Ventres didn't
[587] want a woman to get in the habit of running around with differ-
ent men, so a woman's folks worried if she was unmarried too
long [after being divorced or widowed] because she might do
something bad."

587 There is some evidence that as a woman became older, if she
had occasion to remarry, she was somewhat more free to express
her choice, although presumably a male relative would still be in
the position of making the actual decision. It was said that
584 younger men, especially those seeking to marry "older" women,
832 "were afraid of their tongues" and felt more confident of suc-
cess in possession of "love medicine." Al Chandler, for instance,
was offered a love charm which he refused, but the speech of his
uncle on that occasion throws some light on a situation of this
kind. His uncle had told him: "Now you are a young man
and you will be thinking about women. Maybe you want to get
married and have picked out a woman and she doesn't want you.
Maybe you are not good enough for her and, when you ask her,
she will run you down plenty. Some women are swell-heads and
can make a man feel cheap. It hurts a fellow to hear things like
that—but that is what this charm is for. You take this and keep
it in your pocket safely and do not show it to anyone or let any-
one know you have it. Now if this woman hurts your feelings,
go at night to where she lives and watch carefully, being sure you
have the right one. Then when she goes out of the lodge to re-
lieve herself, watch her so you can locate the exact spot. Then
open this little packet and dip in it the tip of a little sliver of wood.
Go over to the spot and stick the sliver right in the ground on the
spot where she urinated and walk away. That is all you have to
do, and in a very short time this woman will come running after
you. You tell her: 'What are you doing that for? I don't want
you.' She will get so anxious that she will beg you to have her."

585 Regardless of whether the man were the suitor, or whether the
woman's relatives offered her in marriage, the marriage was vali-
dated through presents given by the groom. Traditionally at

Marriage

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Instead of killing an adulterous wife, or one so suspected, the husband might disfigure her and send her away. Coming Daylight witnessed the following scene when she was a child. "She had been sent on an errand by her grandmother to a lodge at some distance from her own. About half-way to her destination as she approached a clump of trees she heard a woman screaming. She then saw that this woman was standing there with her hair tied to the limb of a tree. The woman's husband cut off her nose, and left her tied there and bleeding. Coming Daylight was so frightened that she ran, and on her way back went around the other way to avoid passing that spot again. She doesn't know who released the woman, but she does recall that the woman was so ashamed that she hardly ever went outside her lodge, and if anyone came in she would hold her hand over her face. Ever after that, whenever Coming Daylight met that man, she would make a gesture toward him [double hand into fist, then force fingers out, spreading them wide apart], which means 'I hate you.' Her grandmother used to tell her not to do that lest that man harm her through supernatural means, but she would answer: 'I don't care if he has power. He is cruel and I hate him. We all have to die sometime.'"

The cutting off of the nose was said to be rather a Piegan than a Gros Ventre practice. Cutting off the ears was perhaps a more common form of punishment inasmuch as there is a word designating a woman known to have been unfaithful, and which refers to having the ears cut off.

The adulterous woman whose hair was cut by her husband was not marked permanently as were the others, but it was a severe punishment nonetheless because long thick hair was one of the chief criteria of beauty in women as well as in men. But whatever the form of disfigurement inflicted by the husband, the woman would be cast aside by him and would have to seek refuge with some of her relatives. The family, especially her brothers, would feel keenly the disgrace, but as Singer put it, "Mothers would feel sorry for their daughters and could not refuse to take them in, and they would take their children, too, should they have any. It was very seldom a man would keep the children of a wife sent away for adultery."

Finally, a wronged husband could satisfy his honor by accept-

It was said that when ^{Marriage} virtuous women refused in proper advances, some men overcame their resistance by threat of using love charms or witchcraft against them. There was one man, for instance, described as having been handsome, but who was said to have gotten his way with many women by intimidating them. Coming Daylight said: "One day that man approached me saying: 'If you don't let me have you, your life will be short.' I told him: 'Well, you better take a gun and finish me right now. Maybe that would make you feel good.' I called his bluff, but nothing ever happened to me."

Other men were said to have resorted to trickery and actually deceived women whom they could not get by approaching them openly. There was one individual, for example, a contemporary of Coming Daylight and Singer, who had a well-deserved reputation for "getting the better of women" whose husbands were away from camp. Singer told the following story as typical of the kind of thing this man did. "One certain night this man went to a lodge and crept in beside a woman whose husband was away on a war party. He whispered to her, pretending to be her husband: 'I came home ahead of the others. They don't know it.' Then he added: 'Put our little girl on the other side of the lodge.' The woman did as he told her and they laid together. After a while he asked her: 'How are the children?' But this time she remarked: 'Your voice sounds different.' He allayed her suspicions, however, by saying that he had caught a bad cold. He then quickly made his escape by claiming that he would have to get back to his comrades before they would awaken in order to avoid paying a fine should they discover he had come into camp ahead of the rest of the war party. So in the morning this woman told her mother and her mother-in-law that the war party was returning that day. She went out singing war songs so that everyone in the camp heard her. But after a while, when the war party failed to come in, the people realized that some man must have deceived her. It was later found out who he was and this man's name is used at the present time to indicate any man who tricks a woman into believing he is someone for whom she had been waiting."

There was a considerable discussion of whether or not it had been a Gros Ventre custom in the past to periodically have a public confession of chastity by women. Coming Daylight, Singer,

204 *The Gros Ventres of Montana: Part I, Social Life*

787 began to dig around behind her bedding and brought out a bowl
 775 such as that in which buffalo chips are pounded into powder. She
 said: 'Here. I want you to eat this.' It didn't look good to me
 and I just kind of felt it with my fingers. Instead of having sat
 by my sister as my mother had directed, I had remained by the
 door, because I felt kind of scared in some way. So I told them:
 'Wait. I guess I will go out a minute. I will be right back.' But
 I got out of there and ran home as fast as I could go—back to my
 own bed, back to myself. If I had eaten what they had given me
 that would have been the last of me! After this dream I got well."

MOURNING

765 As soon as word was circulated that someone had died, all rela-
 152 tives of that person, especially the women, were supposed to gather
 as soon as possible to cry and mourn for the deceased. Very close
 kin were expected to show their sorrow at the death of a loved
 one not only by crying and wailing, but also by casting off their
 good clothes and donning old ones,—robes, for instance, consisting
 of pieces of old discarded lodge covers, or ordinary robes that were
 rough and worn,—and by cutting the hair.⁷ This latter was truly
 [82] a great sacrifice, for to the Gros Ventres one of the chief criteria
 [302] of beauty, in men and women alike, was extreme length of hair.
 The hair of younger children in a family was spared, even at the
 death of parents, but should, say, a father die, the hair of the older
 daughters was shorn, though not cut so short as that of the widow.

[88] An elderly woman was usually called upon to do the cutting and
 the widow, guided by the strength of her emotional reaction, would
 indicate how short she wished her hair to be. It was said that
 some widows would leave their hair relatively long, just free of
 the shoulders, while others "when they felt too badly, had all their
 hair cut off, almost as men now wear their hair."

Close kin were accustomed to further show grief by going off
 to the hills and fasting, crying aloud as they wandered about alone,
 and sleeping out without shelter. A parent would have done so
 at the loss of a son, one spouse at the death of the other, or a
 sister for her deceased brother. Such mourners would stay out

⁷ For this and other practices in mourning, see Kroeber, 1908, p. 181.

270 *The Gros Ventres of Montana: Part II, Religion*

756 wood. Something in my sleeve kept biting me. I would sort of
 787 work my sleeve but it kept biting me. Finally I took off my dress
 778 and found it was a big spider with long legs. I did not kill it but
 just brushed it off. That night in a dream the spider told me:
 'Because you had pity on me, I will have pity on you.' But I told
 the spider: 'I do not care for any powers from a bug or spider.'
 Afterwards people told me I should have accepted the offered
 power so that I could doctor spider bites. If you accept a power
 like that you are shown in your dream how to doctor. Nothing
 happens if you refuse such power." Every once in a while people
 were bitten by spiders. Cora Chandler had heard of one such case:
 [65] "One fourth of July at Lodge Pole a woman got bitten while fix-
 ing her tent and died the same evening. Had Singer accepted the
 power offered her, she could have doctored that woman."

Little Man, Al Chandler's adoptive father, once refused power
 from a rattlesnake to cure snake bites, but acquired power to cure
 seven dying persons. He had cured people and wanted to pass
 on what remained of his power to Al. But the latter in recounting
 the matter stated: "I did not want this power on account of the
 Catholic Church. I was afraid I might poison somebody. But the
 old man [Little Man] said: 'You will know all about it and what
 to do. All you have to do is to accept it. The rest will come to you.
 I am getting old and you might need it for your children. You
 could doctor your own children.' But the Catholics did not want
 you to do such things." So Al declined the old man's offer.

787 By three different men, who possessed love power, The Boy
 ● 832 was offered this power, but in all cases he refused. His accounts
 follow.

778 "One old man lived near Bear Paws and when he came to my
 place, then on the Milk River, I used to accommodate him, al-
 though he would eat with my father, Lame Bull. He appreciated
 this and wanted to do something to repay the favor. So he said to
 me: 'I am going to give you my woman's medicine in payment for
 consideration of your service to me. I haven't anything of adequate
 value to pay you back.' He had a looking glass he used to do his
 stuff with. But I diplomatically refused. I told him: 'I do not like
 that kind of thing and never have, although I appreciate the fact

Supernatural Powers

271

that you are grateful and what you are offering to do for me.' The old man did not get mad or insulted, and he said to me: 'It is well you refuse this thing anyhow.' He did not tell me all the details (about the power and its manner of use), because I refused it.

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"Another old man offered me that kind of medicine [love power] out of my appreciation of my good treatment of him, and did not get mad when I refused it."

One other old man, who liked his liquor, was on one occasion given a treat of it by The Boy and another man. Soon the old man was feeling pretty good and started to get generous and said to The Boy: "Now, my son, I am an old man now and I appreciate your giving me this drink, so much so that I am going to give you something worth something." It was this love medicine. But The Boy "refused him nicely" and did not take it.

One final illustration of refusal,—“just an old time story,” Coming Daylight called it who related it,—may be given, the only case we recorded of penalty believed to follow refusal. Perhaps even in this case the refusal was not so much of power as of a request to hold a Sacrifice Lodge.

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"A man was hunting north of the canyon [near the present St. Paul's mission in the Little Rockies] and was shown [by whom?] a nice clean big cave. In this cave were big strings, like a spider puts before he makes a whole web, that is one strand crossing the other at right angles. Right in the middle [at the intersection] was a medicine wheel, of the kind always used at the Sacrifice Lodge. The man just stood and gazed at it. He saw it good and it belonged to the Sacrifice Lodge. He camped in the mountains overnight. That night this wheel told him in his dream: 'You ought to take me so you can make this Sacrifice Lodge.' But the man did not take it. He went back to camp and told his dream and his refusal to take the wheel. After that he began to waste away with a sickness called 'cut away,' in which the flesh starts to disappear in a small place and just sinews show and then it spreads. It was a quick sickness and he died of it. They say this happened to him because he did not take that medicine wheel."

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From what has been recorded on the preceding pages it seems quite clear that the individual was under little or no supernatural

296 *The Gros Ventres of Montana: Part II, Religion*

778 himself was concerned, he had transferred it all away," and "had
425 made himself negative again," that is no longer subject to the
penalties of power possession. This first possessor was, so long
as he kept his power, "a big fellow, but after he had transferred
it to the four other people [men and/or women], there were now
four big people, and he was such no more, so far as power was
concerned and had no right even to sing the songs [proper to
this power]. He was right where he had started [before acquiring
this power]. The four could then go on and do just what he did
when he alone possessed the power and they could [each, ap-
parently] scatter it in four other different directions transfer it
to four others." Such multiple diffusion by transfer did not, it
seems, proceed far in actuality. "Scholars," as The Boy explained,
"may all go through the same school under one great teacher, but
seldom if ever do they all equal the teacher,—maybe only one, if
any, will. So not all who got power by transfer were successful
with the power because maybe they did not do or avoid doing all
that the transferrer told them to do and avoid doing. So after a
while the transferred power just died out."

832 Love power, or love medicine serving as the vehicle of power,
778 could, however, in contrast to doctoring power, be transferred by
425 the owner, at least the original one, to any number of people. It
could be "transferred without limit and sold. The things," The
Boy added by way of comment, "that were better for social life
were limited. Love medicine [or power] was limitless, unless the
possessor stopped gathering the root or bark or whatever it was
he used to do, his stuff."

Whether in cases of transfer by sale of doctoring power by a
man to a woman the granting of sex intercourse by the woman was
always and *de rigueur* the payment or part of the payment, is
not quite clear from our field data. But that it was not uncommonly
required is beyond question; in cases of man-to-woman sale transfer
of love power, it was very common, in fact the usual thing, and
seemingly more or less *de rigueur* to validate the transfer. When
a woman sought such love power from a man who possessed it,
she would watch her chance when his wife was not around and
secretly carry out this part of the bargain. If the transferrer were

Supernatural Powers

297

a woman, one of her adult male kin might be chosen by her to have sexual intercourse with the woman transferee.

To judge from the many anecdotes in circulation about this sex element in transfer payment, anecdotes dating mostly from quite recent decades in the memory of informants, it was a very common topic of gossip and of grapevine communication.

Transfer of power by gift, appears on the whole to have been much more common than transfer by sale. This accords with the general Gros Ventre pattern of transfer of other kinds of property. The Gros Ventre sold little; he gave much. Property changed hands within the tribe much more by donation than by barter.¹⁸

Gifts of power were made either to relatives or to friends, and while the giver still had his or her health, though perhaps of advanced age, and not ordinarily at least, on his death bed. A number of cases of offer to transfer by gift doctoring and love power during the possessor's lifetime have been previously given. War power, according to The Boy, "was commonly given, without payment, to a son or brother." "War medicine," according to Al Chandler, "was passed down from generation to generation; Bull Lodge gave his sons (Curly Head and Otter Robe) their war powers. Curly Head was a medicine man but Otter Robe was more of a warrior. Little Man, my adopted father, had some kind of war medicine from his brother, when his brother got killed Little Man took this medicine (a sparrow-hawk and a shirt) from him to keep it, and to use it."¹⁹ While war power might pass down in a family, we obtained no clear instance of such transmission by inheritance proper, in the sense of transfer to take effect only upon the death of the transferer.

Our data, all from The Boy, on loan and delegation of power, as distinct from outright transfer, are meager. "An owner of power to be lucky in warfare so as not to be shot could lend this to somebody, and if the owner were going to die he could tell the borrower to keep it." "Sometimes, when a man with medicine power was appealed to come and doctor somebody, he could say to his wife:

¹⁸ For details, see Flannery, 1953, pp. 80-87.

¹⁹ Some of Bull Lodge's war medicines are illustrated in Flannery, 1953, Plate 3; cf. also p. 92.

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Supernatural Powers

301

his power only when he was an active participant in the game. 778
 Keg, who had gotten gambling power from a prairie chicken, 525
 would, when using this power in a hand game, imitate the hissing,
 swishing noise made by the prairie chickens when they ruffle their
 tail feathers. He had been given by the prairie chicken its wind-
 pipe to use in the hand game, and for this he made use of a small
 metal spring resembling the windpipe. Red Whip, famous for
 his great gambling power, used a weasel skin in exercising this
 power. A player with power who was losing in a game might half
 seriously voice an appeal: "What is the matter with you, prairie
 chicken (or ghost)? You are failing me."

Only certain songs could be sung in a two-button hand game; 533
 others, such as doctors' songs or medicine lodge songs, could not 784
 then be sung. If one of the players had a gambling power song,
 gotten in a dream from a prairie chicken or ghost, he would start
 singing it and others would join in. Gambling songs were sung in
 fast time to the accompaniment usually of small hand drums, the
 players marked time by striking with sticks the logs that lay
 stretched in front of each team. After a game was well under way,
 in the excitement, grunts would often take the place of songs.

We recorded two gambling songs for the old hand game, num-
 bers 107 and 108, as sung by The Boy.

Love power, more common than gambling power, was acquired, 778
 by quest or transfer, to attain various ends: by a man to secure 832
 sex favors from women who were reluctant to grant them, or
 who had not only rejected his advances but had privately or pub-
 licly met them with insult;¹⁸ by a jilted lover to win back the
 jilting man or woman; by a man or woman to win over a desired
 but unwilling prospective marital mate; by a wife to win back
 the affections and fidelity of a husband who was running around
 with other women.

We could obtain very little information on the rites carried out
 when love power was used. Our chief informant on love power,
 The Boy, had been offered it on various occasions but had never
 accepted it, so had not been told the ritual procedures to use,
 procedures about which the possessors of love power were ap-

¹⁸ See Flannery, 1953, pp. 174, 193.

302 *The Gros Ventres of Montana: Part II, Religion*

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832 parently rather secretive. A root or bark designated by the being that bestowed the power was commonly used, and in some cases a looking glass. A very little bit, just a pinch, of one root or bark was used at a time, and seemingly might be rubbed on a looking glass that was "all painted up and decorated."

778 Before concluding this section on rituals and procedures followed when the major powers—war, wealth, gambling and love—were used, some scattered data may be given on rituals and procedures used with other powers.

Lame Bull, The Boy's father, had clairaudience power from a crow. To use it he would rub his ears with earth, as the crow had told him to do.

Mary Ereaux related the following incident. "My brother-in-law, White Weasel, a great medicine man, once came with his wife in a wagon to visit me. I was busy in the kitchen and after supper came in to the front room, the bedroom, to visit with my guests. White Weasel would kind of groan and say how tired he was, but I didn't think anything of this. Finally, he said: 'My, I have been just dropping and throwing hints and I find I have a hard-hearted sister-in-law. I pretend like I am so tired and here she has three bottles of whiskey in her bedroom and she never offers me a drink. There is one flask that is half empty, a second with the seal unbroken, another in a black leather case.' I was so surprised that he knew all that. My mother told me he could see it but I knew he had not left that corner of the room. . . . This was really a proof of his medicine power." She added: "When White Weasel had a few drinks he would start singing tea dance songs. My mother could then hear a woman's voice singing with him. She said it was a good sweet voice. It was not his wife singing. She could not hear the voice nor could I. Once in a while you would come across someone who, like my mother, could hear it. It was like a vision which some see but which others present cannot see."

Chief Grass on one occasion, when a war party he was with was bothered by a poltergeist, took an arrow, rolled buffalo hair around the arrowhead, singed it a little and spat on it. Then he shot the arrow and subdued the ghost. "Chief Grass had power and this, it was believed, was his way of using it."